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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABIDJAN 000304

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [IV](#)

SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE PEACE AGREEMENT: ALL EYES STILL ON  
OUAGA

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Classified By: PolOff Laura Taylor-Kale, Reasons 1.4 (b & d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Political actors in Abidjan are still looking ahead to what round two of the Ouagadougou Peace Accord (OPA) will bring as NF leader Guillaume Soro and President Gbagbo negotiate the powers of the Prime Minister. In the meantime, Soro is under pressure to accept the Premiership. Several opposition parties have publicly supported the possible appointment of Soro but the two largest parties of the RHDP, the RDR and PDCI, are wavering over the proposal and the coalition appears to be fractured. While Abidjan focuses on Ouaga, President Gbagbo took the first step to implement OPA by signing a decree to create a joint command center. END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (SBU) More than two weeks after the signing of the OPA between NF leader Guillaume Soro and President Gbagbo, political observers here remain cautiously optimistic that the agreement will hold, but the political discussions over the soon-to-be announced new government are becoming increasingly tense. The audiences foraines to register the population have been suspended until the new government is formed. In the meantime, all eyes remain fixed on Ouagadougou.

[1](#)3. (C) Some opposition figures have publicly supported the notion of Soro becoming Prime Minister. However, the RDR has remained notably silent while the PDCI, maintaining that Banny should remain Prime Minister, has suffered by appearing unenthusiastic about OPA; the FPI is crowing that the PDCI leadership does not support peace. Although PM Banny tries to appear active, his credibility has been compromised and he is a lame duck (reftel D). Gbagbo has not publicly discussed Banny (COMMENT: Banny may be positioning himself for a political future as the political maneuvering within the PDCI continues. END COMMENT.)

[1](#)4. (C) As reported by Embassy Ouagadougou and later confirmed by Ivorian press reports, Compaore invited Soro back to Ouagadougou for further discussions on March 13 and 14 to iron out a power sharing deal. This week delegations led by Gbagbo's representative Desire Tagro and NF Deputy Dacoury Tabley are in Ouagadougou again to get final agreement (the details of which many observers believe could very well remain secret) on the powers of the Premier in what is widely being called "round two" of the direct dialogue negotiations. Soro has reportedly waited for the African Union and the UN Security Council to officially endorse the agreement before taking the premiership; the AU sent its recommendation to

"fully support" the OPA to the UNSC on March 19, and in his address to the nation on March 20, Soro remained rather coy about accepting the PM job.

15. (SBU) Abidjan is so focused on the Ouaga negotiations and the makeup of the next government that President Gbagbo's March 16 signing of the decree to create a joint command center went largely unnoticed. The decree as stipulated in the OPA is the first step to integrating the FN and government troops. The two chiefs of staff successively held meetings with President Gbagbo on Friday and Soro on Saturday. Sources close to both the FANCI and the FAFN indicate that, aside from the decree, little if anything has been done to actually implement the joint command center concept.

16. (C) COMMENT: There seem to be parallel processes underway as Abidjan looks to the future of the OPA: the formality of AU and UN endorsement of the agreement alongside the continued negotiations between Gbagbo and Soro on the Prime Minister's authority. Soro's hesitation to take the post may indeed be an act (reftel D) but he has real concerns, shared by FN heavyweights and opposition figures, that Gbagbo would retain decisive control over the government and armed forces. RDR leader Alassane Ouattara, while publicly supportive of the agreement, is desperate to keep the RHDP coalition intact and to maintain the leadership of Bedie over the splintering PDCI. Otherwise, Ouattara fears that the Fololo-led faction of the PDCI will support Gbagbo in the upcoming elections. Soro's acceptance of the Premiership in a Gbagbo-controlled government could undermine RDR-NF cooperation in the north. The signing of the decree by Gbagbo establishing a joint command center is a first step in complying with OPA, but is also largely symbolic; real integration wouldn't take place until well into the DDR process after the elections. While the political scene

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continues its minuet, what is happening in Ouaga continues to dominate the scene. END COMMENT.  
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